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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

STERRETT, JONATHAN G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 10/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/070,731	NAKAGAWA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jonathan G. Sterrett	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 March 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-46 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-46 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some    c) ☒ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)            | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/7/05 &amp; 12/18/02 &amp; 9-18-02</u>                       | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Summary*

1. **Claims 1-46** are pending in the application.

### *Priority*

2. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority based on an application filed in Japan on 7-13-2000. It is noted, however, that applicant has not filed a certified copy of the 2000-213545 application as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b).

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112*

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. **Claims 1-11** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

**Claim 1** recites the limitation "the work control site and the work executing sites exchange between those managing information". It is not clear which entities "those" refers to. Does "those" specifically refer to the work control and executing sites or does it refer to others who are operating within the respective sites. Therefore the claim is indefinite. For the purpose of examination, the examiner interprets this claim limitation to mean that the information is exchanged between the two sites.

**Claims 2-11** depend on Claim 1 and are indefinite for at least the reason cited above for Claim 1.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. **Claims 1-46** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Brown US 5,923,552** (hereinafter **Brown**).

Regarding **Claim 1**, Brown teaches:

**a work control location for instructing the progress of work and monitoring its progress to the plurality of work executing sites while linking them with each other,**

column 4 line 3-7, the home builder (i.e the work control site) instructs the progress of work and monitors progress of the suppliers (see also column 4 line 60-64, supplier schedules who are providing components to a product fabricator).

column 9 line 32-35, the distributed scheduling subsystem links the members together through the interrelated product schedules.

**Where the work control location and the work executing locations exchange between those managing information relating to the instructions and monitoring through a communications network.**

column 9 line 32-35, the distributed scheduling subsystem uses Critical Path Management (CPM) to direct exchange of information and monitoring between collaborative parties (i.e. members who are working together to support an overall project plan).

Brown teaches using a communications network to connect the work locations and the work control location (column 5 line 30-34).

Brown does not teach where the locations are websites, however it is old and well known in the art to exchange work information between websites on the internet (i.e. a communications network) to connect locations together. The internet provides the capability to efficiently connect different locations together using websites because it provides coverage that is worldwide.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Brown, regarding providing for geographically dispersed work locations to be connected together using a network, to connect those locations together using websites, because it would provide the world wide coverage of the internet to connect the worksites together.

Regarding **Claim 2**, Brown teaches:

**wherein the work control site systematically plans and sets flows of execution of work to be assigned to the plurality of working executing sites for a work process**

column 7 line 58-63, the fabrication schedule is communicated to the suppliers (i.e. the working executing sites) who are responsible for their part of the schedule (i.e. the flow of execution that is their work process).

**and instructs the progress of the set flows of execution and monitors the progress of the flows of execution.**

column 8 line 7-12, the establishment of restrictive links and the monitoring of these links between members monitors the progress of the flows of execution as each member contributes to the progress of the project they are supporting.

Regarding **Claim 3**, Brown teaches:

**wherein the work control site includes a work information displaying means for providing work information set for said work executing sites to the work executing sites,**

column 6 line 58-60, a calendar of tasks is provided to display to the various collaborating parties tasks and work stages necessary for carrying out their tasks in support of the project.

**a notification displaying means for notifying the work executing sites of the work information,**

column 7 line 30-35, the messages regarding work tasks are received and appear (i.e. are displayed as notification) as requiring attention. See column 7 line 10-13 – suppliers confirm delivery dates after receiving notification.

**and a confirmation displaying means for confirming responses from work executing sites regarding notifications by said notification displaying means.**

column 7 line 10-13, confirmations are sent from the other suppliers (e.g. a confirmation regarding material delivery).

Regarding **Claim 4**, Brown teaches:

**wherein the work information is one or both of the content of the work and a work schedule relating to the progress of the work.**

column 7 line 5-10, the work information communicated to and from the suppliers includes schedules (i.e. tasks that represent the content of the work) so that coordination can be achieving between the main site and the supplier.

Regarding **Claim 5**, Brown teaches a desktop calendar system and a network service distribution system for coordinating geographically dispersed activities. Brown teaches that his invention operates over a computer network.

While Brown teaches the notification and confirming displaying means as discussed in Claim 4 above, Brown does not teach using the internet or web pages for displaying confirmation or notification.

However, it is old and well known in the art for web pages (i.e. browsers) to be used to display notification and confirmation. The internet provides the benefit of widespread availability since it is available around the world.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Brown, regarding providing for geographically dispersed project collaboration and communication, including confirmation and notification, to include the step of displaying the notification and confirmation displays using web pages accessed over the internet, because it would provide widespread, around-the-world availability to Brown's project collaboration invention.

Regarding **Claim 6**, Brown teaches communicating work information to various sites so that different suppliers can integrate their schedules with a master schedule (e.g. for a home building or a product fabricator (see column 4 line 60-65). :

**wherein the provision of the work information by the work information displaying means is performed on web pages in synchronization with the work information notified by the notification displaying means.**

column 7 line 30-35, notification is synchronized by messages appearing as calendar entries that notify members that an action is required. The calendar entries providing work information as to what the tasks are.

Regarding **Claim 7**, Brown teaches:



**wherein when there is a notification, this notification is informed by a signal of a mode of expression different from normal.**

column 7 line 30-32, the appearance of calendar entries requiring attention are different than normal since they require attention.

Regarding **Claim 8**, Brown teaches:

**wherein when there is provision of information; this provision of information is informed by a signal of a mode of expression, different from normal.**

column 7 line 30-32, the appearance of calendar entries identifying tasks to be done (i.e. work information) requiring attention are different than normal since they indicate that something new is required.

Regarding **Claim 9**, Brown teaches displaying in parallel the work tasks (i.e. flows of execution) assigned to all the members (i.e. work executing sites) and provides this in common to all the work executing sites (see column 9 line 32-37). See Figure 2B where interdependencies between the schedules of individual project members are displayed. While Brown teaches the need to communicate between network members supporting a project, and displaying in parallel the flows of execution so that interrelated schedules can be communicated (see column 9 line 38-40). Brown does not teach displaying the schedules on web pages to the work executing sites.

However, it is old and well known in the art to display information on webpages. The internet provides for the ability to receive and display information using a browser (i.e. a web page) on a worldwide basis (i.e. world wide web).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Brown, regarding providing for geographically dispersed project collaboration and communication, including displaying the project execution flows in parallel, to include the step of using web pages accessed over the internet, because it would provide widespread, around-the-world availability to Brown's project collaboration invention.

Regarding **Claim 10**, Brown teaches:

**wherein, when there is a change in the work information,  
the work control site reports this change all at once to the work executing sites**

column 9 line 32-36, changes in schedule (i.e. tasks that have to be completed according to timing, i.e. the tasks are work information) are automatically communicated to other work sites, i.e. this information is reported so as to maintain an integrated schedule and ensure updates do not result in unresolvable scheduling conflicts (see column 11 line 45-50).

Column 12 line 64-66, unresolved conflicts may result in new suppliers being RFQ'ed.-see also column 8 line 50-55.

**and simultaneously receives a plurality of responses when requesting responses from the work executing sites about the report.**

column 8 line 60-63, changes in schedule involving a bid request (i.e. a request for quotation), receive a plurality of responses from those network members receiving the bid requests (i.e. a request to respond).

Regarding **Claim 11**, Brown teaches providing a communications network that provides notification about scheduling to network members and information regarding work information for network members to maintain their compliance with a schedule. As discussed above, Brown teaches providing notification that is different from normal (see column 7 line 29-33) and in providing work information to network members related to the notification. Brown does not teach using a web page containing a clickable link to display notification information and a clickable link to provide work information.

However, using clickable links in a web browser to display information in separate browser windows when a user is using the internet is old and well known in the art. This method of communication using the internet provides an easy to use interface to communicate information.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Brown, regarding providing notification that is different from normal (see column 7 line 29-33) and in providing work information to

network members related to the notification, to include the step of using clickable links to provide the notification and work information related to the notification, because it would provide an easy to use interface to communicate information.

Regarding **Claim 12**, Brown teaches providing a communications network that provides information regarding work information for network members to maintain their compliance with a schedule. As discussed above, Brown teaches providing notification that is different from normal (see column 7 line 29-33) and in providing work information to network members related to the notification. Brown teaches that the notification of work information may include launching additional applications that provide the work information (i.e. in resolving the notification message). Brown does not teach using a web page containing a clickable link to provide work information.

However, using clickable links in a web browser to display information in separate browser windows when a user is using the internet is old and well known in the art. This method of communication using the internet provides an easy to use interface to communicate information.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Brown, regarding providing notification that is different from normal (see column 7 line 29-33) and in providing work information to network members related to the notification, to include the step of using clickable links

to provide the additional work information related to the notification, because it would provide an easy to use interface to communicate information.

**Claims 13-35 and 44-46** recite similar limitations as those recited in **Claims 1-12** above, and are therefore rejected under the same rationale.

Regarding **Claims 36-43**, the limitations are rejected under the same rationale as Claims 1-12 above, except for the additional limitation of the terminals displaying information being continuously on. Brown does not teach that the terminals used by suppliers and supporting parties to the overall project being continuously on. However, it is old and well known in the art for terminals that receive notification and work information to be kept continuously on. In mission-critical situations, this ensures that notification and work information is not missed because of a terminal being turned off and thus being unable to receive the information.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the teachings of Brown, regarding connecting different suppliers and parties who are supporting a project using a computer network and terminals, to include the step of having the terminals continuously on (i.e. operating), because it would ensure a supplier would receive mission-critical information from the main control site.

***Conclusion***

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Anonymous, "IBM: How to reap rewards of intranet technology", Nov 11, 1996, Computer Reseller News n709 PP: 165-178.

Kolbus, David, "Building a collaborative advantage", Jan/Feb 1992, Work Study v41n1 PP: 10-15, Dialog 00670085 93-19306.

Cox, Nancy; "Passing The Baton With Four Enterprise-Ready Workflow Management Products", Oct 15, 1997, Network Computing, p130, Dialog 05288720 Supplier Number: 48053973.

Anonymous, "Document management: Fujitsu Software Corp. builds momentum in its partnering strategy for the workflow market. Fujitsu Software's TeamWARE Flow becomes the workflow engine for Pegasus Imaging Corp.'s TRANSFLO.", Dec 1, 1997, EDGE: Work-Group Computing Report, v8, p16(1), Dialog 09895966 SUPPLIER NUMBER: 20035266

BusinessWire, "TeamCenter 2.0 Arrives with Key Innovations from Inovie Software; Collaborative Project management System Provides Advanced Features For Planning, Coordinating and Tracking Project Work", Dec 8, 1998, retrieved from [www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-53364900.html](http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-53364900.html).

US 20020046147 A1 by Livesay discloses a method for monitoring a workflow process.

US 6470227 B1 By Rangachari discloses a method for automating a manufacturing workflow.

US 6798413 B1 by Tracey discloses a workflow management system.

US 5815152 A by Collier discloses a graphical system for displaying workflow processes.

US 6064977 A by Haverstock discloses a web server with integrated scheduling and calendaring.

US 6065009 A by Leymann discloses using process models for workflow management systems.

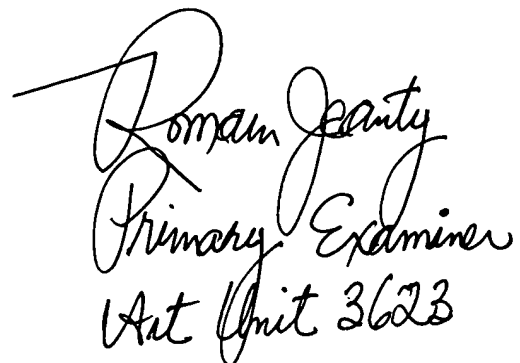
US 6631354 B1 by Leymann discloses running workflow manager enclaves from workflows.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan G. Sterrett whose telephone number is 571-272-6881. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JGS 9-25-06



Roman Janty  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3623